

# Sigma English Workbook

## NCEA Achievement Standard 1.4

### Creative Writing

S. Battye and D. J. Wort

#### List of Contents

|                                                       |     |                                                                  |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Understanding the Standard .....                      | 1   | Task 25 - Brainstorming for Narrative Writing .....              | 22    |
| Training for English AS 1.4 .....                     | 2   | Task 26 - Your Viewpoint - Narrative .....                       | 23    |
| Task 1 - Develop a Writing Portfolio .....            | 3-4 | Task 27 - The Other Person's Viewpoint - Narrative .....         | 24    |
| Task 2 - Aspects of Language - A Glossary .....       | 5-6 | Painting in Words .....                                          | 25    |
| The Structure of Texts .....                          | 7   | Task 28 - Brainstorming for Descriptive Writing .....            | 25-27 |
| Task 3 - Recognising Text Types .....                 | 7   | Task 29 - Your Viewpoint - Descriptive Writing .....             | 28    |
| Task 4 - Analysing a Narrative .....                  | 8   | Task 30 - Another Person's Viewpoint - Descriptive Writing ..... | 29    |
| Task 5 - Your Life as a Source .....                  | 8   | Task 31 - Brainstorming for Poetry .....                         | 30    |
| Task 6 - Less Can Be More .....                       | 9   | The Structure of Poetry .....                                    | 31-32 |
| Task 7 - Clues in the Narrative .....                 | 9   | Task 32 - Create Your Own Poem .....                             | 33    |
| Task 8 - Sight, Smell, Taste and Touch .....          | 10  | Personal Writing - It's All About ME! .....                      | 34    |
| Viewpoints .....                                      | 11  | Task 33 - Brainstorming Practice .....                           | 34    |
| Task 9 - Comparing Viewpoints .....                   | 11  | Task 34 - Brainstorming a Personal Account .....                 | 35-36 |
| Task 10 - What Does an Emotion Look Like? .....       | 13  | Task 35 - Drafting a Personal Account .....                      | 37-38 |
| Task 11 - Writing the 'Show' Details .....            | 13  | Task 36 - Elements of a Script .....                             | 39    |
| Creating Impact! .....                                | 14  | Task 37 - Unpacking the Play Text .....                          | 41    |
| Task 12 - Exaggerate or Telescope or Both .....       | 14  | Script Writing - Text Conventions .....                          | 42    |
| Task 13 - Character Clues from Dialogue .....         | 15  | Task 38 - Finish the Scene .....                                 | 42-43 |
| Task 14 - Dialogue for a Dominant Character .....     | 15  | Task 39 - Planning Your Own Script .....                         | 44    |
| Thoughts and Feelings .....                           | 16  | Task 40 - Drafting Your Own Script .....                         | 45-46 |
| Task 15 - Using a Flashback .....                     | 16  | Redrafting 1 - Sentences and Words .....                         | 47    |
| Task 16 - Stream of Consciousness .....               | 17  | Task 41 - Small Changes, More Interest .....                     | 47    |
| Task 17 - Hopes and Dreams .....                      | 17  | Redrafting 2 - Spelling and Punctuation .....                    | 48    |
| Mood Commands the Reader's Attention .....            | 18  | Task 42 - Accuracy = Achieved .....                              | 48    |
| Task 18 - Mood as Reinforcement .....                 | 18  | Task 43 - Proof-Reading for Pronouns .....                       | 49    |
| Task 19 - Mood as Contrast .....                      | 18  | Task 44 - Proof-Reading for Tense .....                          | 49-50 |
| Capturing the Correct Mood .....                      | 19  | Task 45 - Proof-Reading for Singular and Plural .....            | 50    |
| Task 20 - Establishing Urgency and Intensity .....    | 19  | Task 46 - Proof-Reading for Participle Problems .....            | 50    |
| Task 21 - Establishing Bulk and a Slow Pace .....     | 20  | A Proof-Reading Checklist .....                                  | 51    |
| Task 22 - Switching on Memories and Imagination ..... | 20  | Task 47 - Proof-Reading Practice .....                           | 51    |
| Task 23 - Words with Moods Attached .....             | 20  | Spelling - A Survival Guide .....                                | 52-53 |
| From Brainstorming to Structure .....                 | 21  | Punctuation - A Survival Guide .....                             | 54    |
| Task 24 - Structuring a Story .....                   | 21  | A Model Essay .....                                              | 55-56 |
|                                                       |     | Answers to Tasks .....                                           | 57-58 |

# 1 Understanding the Standard

## Achievement Standard 1.4 - Create Meaning : Creative Writing AS90052

**Title :** Produce creative writing

**Assessment :** Internal      **Credits :** 3      **Subfield :** English      **Domain :** English Written Language

| Achievement                                                                                                                                                                                | Achievement with Merit                                                                                                                                                                                               | Achievement with Excellence                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and structure ideas in creative writing.</li> <li>Use language features appropriate to audience and purpose in creative writing.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and structure ideas convincingly in creative writing.</li> <li>Use language features appropriate to audience and purpose with control in creative writing.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and structure ideas effectively in creative writing.</li> <li>Use language features appropriate to audience and purpose with control to command attention in creative writing.</li> </ul> |

To pass this Standard you will have carefully **drafted, reworded and presented at least one piece of appropriate creative writing in a portfolio.**

In preparing for the internal examination you will draft, rework and present at least one piece of creative writing that expresses imaginative and creative ideas. Ideas may include thoughts, feelings, experiences or sensory qualities. Your written pieces for development and feedback may be chosen from the following selection: **descriptions, narratives, poems, personal accounts, scripts, or other appropriate creative writing.**

During the actual examination period you will be required to write and present **one piece of creative writing** of at least **200 words** in length.

### Skills Required for Success in this Achievement Standard

**Key Skills :** Ideas, Style, Organisation, Accuracy

- ☐ **Develop and structure ideas** : means to build on a single idea by adding details or examples, linking that idea to other ideas and details appropriate to the selected text type.
- ☐ **Develop and structure ideas convincingly** : means that the development of the ideas and structure is generally credible and connected.
- ☐ **Develop and structure ideas effectively** : means that the development of the ideas and structure is compelling and well-organised.
- ☐ **Use language features** : means that vocabulary selection, syntax, stylistic features and written text conventions (including spelling, punctuation, grammar) are appropriate to the audience and the purpose for a selected text type. It also means that written text conventions are used without intrusive error patterns, such as a pattern of errors in syntax (e.g. sentence fragments, where structures are not used intentionally; and 'run on' syntax); or a pattern of other significant errors (e.g. mixed tense sequences, mis-capitalisation).
- ☐ **Use language features with control** : means that language features are selected and linked to the intended purpose and audience for the selected text type. It also means that text conventions are used accurately so that the writing contains only minor errors.
- ☐ **Use language features with control to command attention** : means that the original and sustained use of language features, distinctive personal voice, and dimensions or viewpoints are linked to the intended purpose and audience for the selected text type. It also means that text conventions are used accurately so that the writing contains only minor errors.

## Determining Your Grade - Levels of Thinking

The grades **Achievement**, **Merit** and **Excellence** represent different levels of thinking. Consider the following two questions.

**Question 1 :** *Develop and structure ideas in order to write a story of at least 200 words in length about a personal childhood experience.*

This question requires only a simple level of thinking so the only level that you are likely to attain is **Achieved**.

The key words are '*Develop and structure ideas in order to write a story of at least 200 words . . .*'

**Question 2 :** *Use language features in the course of writing a story of at least 200 words in length about a personal childhood experience.*

This question can be answered showing a simple understanding or a deep understanding. For questions like this the full range of grades (Achievement, Merit and Excellence) are available and your awarded grade will depend on the level of understanding you display in your answer. The key words are '*Use language features. . .*'

### Achievement Level Thinking

First you need to show that you understand the meaning of the term *develop and structure ideas* in creative writing. Secondly you need to show that you understand the meaning of the term *use language features* in the course of writing your piece of creative text. Finally you need to show that you understand the meaning of the terms *purpose* and *audience*. In answering the question you demonstrate that you have been writing creatively '*on the lines*'. Note : Writing that only develops ideas without being particularly **believable** or **convincing** can only gain **Achieved**.

Determining Your Grade continues on next page

## 2 Training for English AS 1.4

### Determining Your Grade - Levels of Thinking - continued

#### Merit Level Thinking

As well as doing all of the tasks identified for Achievement Level Thinking (above) you will need to demonstrate that you have taken note of precise instructions related to word length and subject matter such as '*... writing a story of at least 200 words in length about a personal childhood experience.*' You will need to show that you understand how to *develop* and *structure* connected ideas in the creative writing process. You need to *use selected language features* with some control. In order to be convincing your answer will need to make your *purpose* in writing the piece and *intended audience* apparent by making a *direct link* with your language features. You must demonstrate that you are capable of writing creatively '*between the lines*'.

#### Excellence Level Thinking

As well as doing all of the tasks identified for Achievement and Merit Levels of Thinking (above) you will need to structure your ideas *effectively* throughout your piece of creative writing piece and use language features that are appropriate to the audience and purpose in such a way that you *command attention* through your writing.

To demonstrate these two qualities your piece of writing must include ideas that are *compelling* and *well organised*. Images will be further *developed* and *sustained over more than one sentence*. Your writing will be *fluent* and *coherent* and show that you understand the connection between the *writer's craft*, *purpose* and *audience*. You demonstrate that you have been writing '*beyond the lines*' on the page.

### Developing Your Skills

AS 1.4 is a standard that you can work on throughout the year both in and out of class. It definitely relates closely to a number of other standards such as AS 1.1 (Show understanding of specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), using supporting evidence); and AS 1.5 (Produce formal writing). Note that reading or re-reading AS 1.3 (Show understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, using supporting evidence) will prepare you to succeed in AS 1.4.

#### Writing Experience

The key to achieving this standard is to write on a wide variety of topics and in a wide variety of styles, not only the ones suggested by your classroom teacher. Gather **ideas**. You also need to feed your imagination and develop your vocabulary by reading texts from all sections of the library, but especially in the novel, short story, poetry, and drama sections.

In addition, you could read articles from your local suburban newspaper or from one of the major daily newspapers. It is likely that articles and news reports will give you writing ideas. Magazines such as the '*Listener*', '*Creme*' and '*New Zealand Geographic*' will also assist you greatly in expanding your vocabulary and general knowledge.

You can also download items or print-out stories from internet news sites such as '*Stuff NZ*' or '*The BBC News*' if they spark your imagination. When in doubt about the **appropriateness of a topic** to use for this standard, refer to your teacher who will advise you.



READ MORE OF THESE

#### Look Closely at the Structure of the Texts You Read

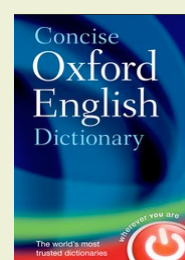
Look closely at the way the writers have **constructed** their text. Examine their **style**. How is the theme introduced? What were the events that created minor or major climaxes in the piece? How is it concluded? Does it hold your attention and if so why? This sort of close examination of the pieces you read will develop Excellence level thinking. You need to thoroughly **organise** your writing.

In every text you read, try to identify the **language features** the writer has used. Ask yourself why did he or she choose to express their ideas this way? How does this language feature help communicate the writer's viewpoint? If you find a **style** of writing that appeals to you, try it out for yourself. It is not permitted to copy content, but you are allowed to imitate a style of writing.

#### Practise Punctuation and Spelling

Become **accurate** in your writing skills. Sharpen your awareness of the text by noticing the details of the punctuation the writer has used. Reading aloud is great way to gain a better understanding of the text. You need to pay attention to which words are emphasised or stressed, where commas have been placed (small pauses) and which sentences are questions or statements.

Your own spelling and punctuation is also an issue. To reach Excellence level your writing must be '*fluent and coherent*'. Correct spelling and punctuation skills are essential to reach this level. You cannot rely solely on a spell checker to do the work for you. Use a dictionary to be certain that you are using the right word correctly.



TO BE SURE OF  
BOTH SPELLING  
AND USAGE  
YOU MUST USE A  
DICTIONARY

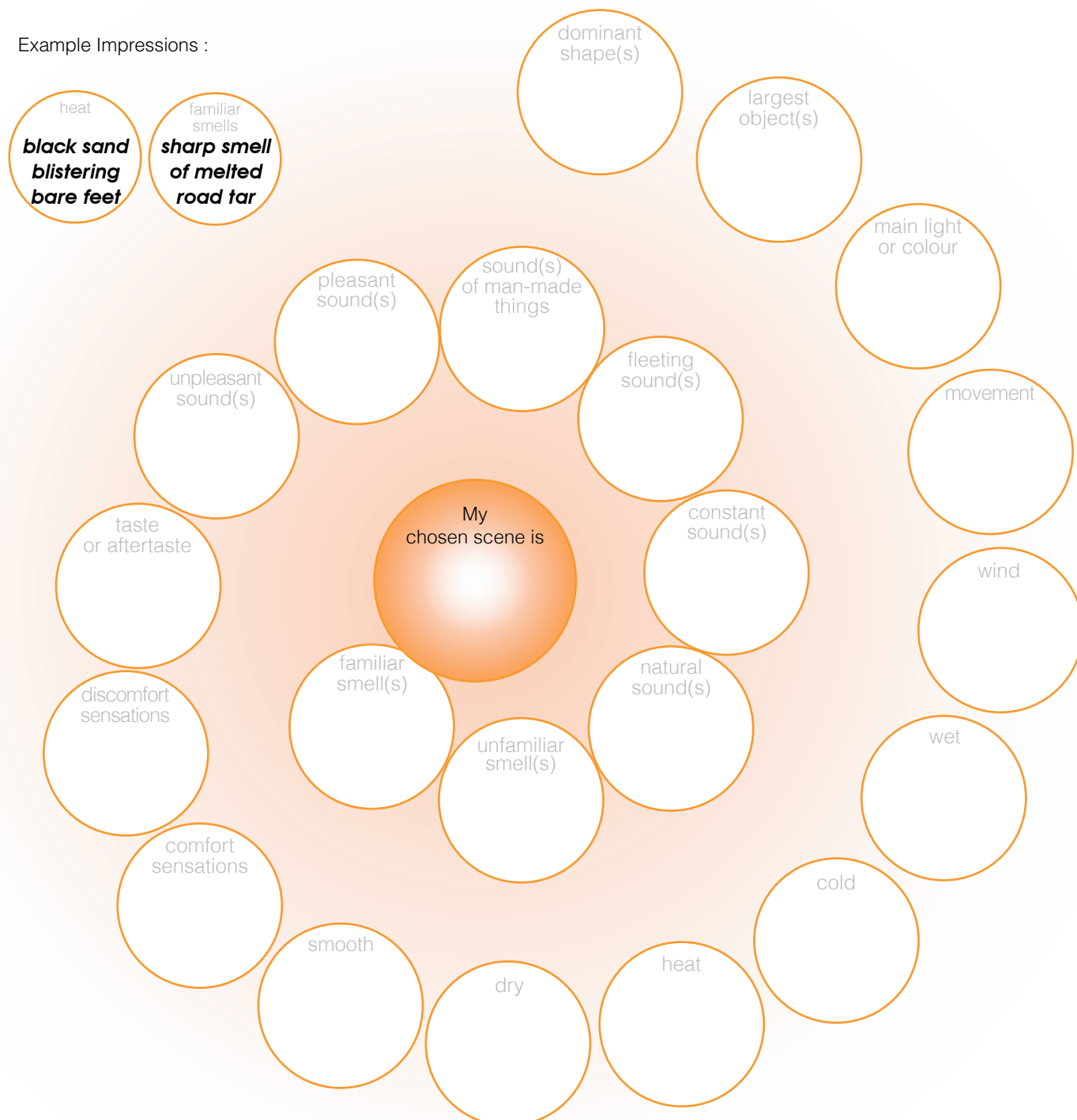


## 10 Focus in Description

### Task 8 Sight, Smell, Taste and Touch

- 1 Think of a scene that you might choose to describe. Use the impression bubbles to brainstorm the sight, sound, smell, taste and touch elements of the scene. You can work from memory, a picture or your imagination. The examples below describe a beach in summer. The grey words are just prompts.

Example Impressions :



- 2 Now choose a focus. You could focus on **details**, e.g. emphasise the human element or exclude the human element. Alternatively you could focus on the **mood**, e.g. emphasise the positive elements and omit negative elements.
  - a) Write the kind of detail or mood you have chosen to focus on.
  - b) Cross out (a single line is best) the impressions that you would not include in your description.

## 14 Show, Don't Tell

### Creating Impact!

Whether your writing is based on real experience or not, there are ways you can develop your starting ideas to create something with more **impact**. The key ideas are **telescoping** and **exaggeration**.

#### Heightening Setting

Suppose the action takes place in a shopping mall. The escalators, the performance area and the security staff office would really be separated by one or two hundred metres. For the dramatic conclusion to your narrative you could locate them all in one spot, i.e. you would telescope them. The real action might happen at a quiet time in the mall, but your story would have more impact if there were literally hundreds of strangers watching you. What could be worse? Some police and a TV crew there to cover a performance? Add them to the setting. They won't affect your storyline, but they will add to the impact if you achieve something brave or embarrassing in your storyline. This is the idea of **exaggeration**.

#### Heightening Characters

Sometimes **telescoping** two characters into one will improve your story. For example, if a student is bullied in minor ways by two or three others, the impact is not very intense and it takes a lot of narrating. If you combine all the bullies into one, he or she becomes a much more loathsome character, and of course a single character can be defeated in a single event, so your storyline is simpler. Your nemesis can always be made taller, heavier, uglier and marked with a scar or a tattoo and equipped with a fence batten or hockey stick, not to mention the big brother already in jail! Similarly for animals - it is a Dobermann, not a fox terrier, that snarls at you as you pass the open gate . . . This is the idea of **exaggeration** again.

#### Heightening Action

You can make the action in your story both more urgent and more dramatic. Being trapped in a car wreck is interesting but it can be more interesting if it is urgent, e.g. the car has caught fire and will blow up when the flames reach the petrol tank, or the car has flipped into the bed of a river that is rising swiftly. You could add a bleeding haemophiliac, a diabetic going into insulin shock and a woman going into labour, but you have to know where to draw the line.

**Telescoping** works for action too : hitting a rock and springing a leak in your boat (on Saturday) can be telescoped into the boat's engine failing (on Sunday) and both telescoped into the last half hour of daylight. **Exaggeration** is easy too : the car speeding around the corner becomes the car rounding the bend on screaming tyres, which becomes the car cornering on two wheels and so on.



### Task 12 Exaggerate or Telescope or Both

1 Using the techniques explained above, rewrite these sentences with heightened effect.

- a) *When I came to, I was cold.*
- b) *She had a big bouquet of roses.*
- c) *The track was steep and slippery.*
- d) *There were few passers-by in that dimly-lit street.*
- e) *I fell off my mountain bike and hurt my arm.*
- f) *In her bridesmaid's gown and make-up she looked pretty.*
- g) *The theatre smelled of popcorn and coke.*
- h) *I could feel myself blushing.*



## 21 Structuring Narrative Writing

### From Brainstorming to Structure

Now we are ready to look at the skills you need to **design** a story. The first of these is how to **brainstorm** and how to get from the brainstorm to the **essay structure**. Because there are different kinds of creative writing, they are going to have different kinds of brainstorming and different essay structures. First let's look at narrative writing.

#### Structuring Narrative Writing

Your story will have a **timeline** (first event, second event etc). The natural thing to do, therefore, is to put the events into *chronological* (time) *order*. Next, you need to choose the event on the list that is going to give the **strongest ending**. It probably won't be the last thing you wrote down. Then you need to choose an event that is going to give a **strong opening** - one that is going to introduce *dynamic action* or pose an *interesting challenge* for your hero. It probably won't be the first thing you wrote down.

Now examine the events you left out *before* the event you chose to open with and *after* the event you chose to end with. If the events are still important to the understanding or emotional impact of the story, then select the best place to relate them. This means you will, for example, write a *flashback* - which is a good skill to practise.

Next, look at the events between the beginning and the end. If there are too many, **cut out the weaker ones**. If there are too few, either **split the events** on your list into separate ones or **invent some extra action**. Take the time to do this properly because it will give you an **effective story structure** and you can get on with the writing with confidence.

So, what are the **strongest endings**? You have to forget about the way stories are told on the TV news or in the newspaper where they tell you the endings in the first sentence or two. The simplest and always reliable ending is **the major climax** where after an intense effort or conflict the hero wins or loses. Trickier, but often more true-to-life, is **the anticlimax** where the story builds up towards some dramatic climax, but the end is a sudden let-down. For example . . .

*Boy meets girl, boy falls for girl, girl is nice to him, always speaks to him when they meet, boy is ready to ask her to the school ball, girl says she has something special to ask him after school, boy is happy, then girl asks him to introduce her to his best friend because she likes him. Awww.*

This story is also an example of the **late disclosure** technique where the writer hides something important from the reader until late in the story. '**Control**' means not over-explaining your ending, ideally not explaining it at all. If the hero makes a big decision, we don't need to know what happened then; the decision is the most important thing.



### Task 24 Structuring a Story

Here are the events of a simple story listed in chronological order.

- Jason gets a hunting rifle for his fifteenth birthday.
- then . . . Jason and his father go hunting with Jason's cousin and his father.
- then . . . Jason and his cousin skate about their hunting skill and each bet that they will kill the first deer.
- then . . . The party splits into two father-son pairs to hunt along each side of a ridge.
- then . . . Jason and his father come across fresh signs of deer as they climb.
- then . . . Jason sees something brown move in a thicket and takes a shot at it.
- then . . . Jason runs into the thicket and finds the body of his cousin.
- then . . . They tramp out of the bush and call the police.
- then . . . Three weeks later Jason is tried and found guilty of manslaughter.

- Task : Choose the **best end point**. It should be at the most dramatic or most moving moment of the story. Write down the letter of the event you choose.

- Task : Choose the **best structure** : start with **interesting action**, then get **any necessary explanations** over with, and build steadily to **the climax**. This means putting events out of time order. Write down the letters of the events in their new order.

## 25 Descriptive Writing - A Moment in Time

### Painting in Words

You have seen the first stage of a brainstorm for descriptive writing on page 10. It contained clusters of **impressions** from the five senses and this is the way to begin descriptive writing. When you know what the **mood** of your description will be, you **eliminate** impressions that work against the mood and possibly **add** new items to strengthen the mood. **Human activity** is usually part of the scene you are '*painting in words*'. It is a source of interest and emotional response so it shouldn't be treated casually. You do need to remember that descriptive writing should be **like a photo**, not a film, so don't let the activity develop into an action story. Go back to page 10 and **draw lines which will connect these impressions** from the brainstorm and there you have the outline of one paragraph!

As with narrative (page 21), it is important to begin the planning of your descriptive writing by deciding on **the ending**. The impression that will linger longest in the mind of your reader should be both **graphic** and **charged with feeling**. It is the best place in the description for you to '*put yourself into the picture*'.

In a beach scene, for example, you might begin with the horizon and move steadily closer until, after describing this clean and beautiful environment, you come at last to your own feet at the high-tide mark and there is the body of a penguin, its head still trapped in the plastic net that strangled it. Nasty but true - and powerful because it is both. You don't need to make a protest about pollution in words; every reader will have got the point already.

For your **beginning** you need to choose something which is **striking** because of its size or its strangeness. It could be strikingly big or small, loud or quiet, just so long as it is not ordinary. Your beach scene could begin - '*Within the coils of the great snake, a toddler in a pink sunhat is making a pile of shells.*' The snake will turn out to be the toddler's big brother's sand sculpture, but by now your reader is hooked.

There needs to be an easily understood way for the reader to '**get**' the overall picture, to be able to relate the impressions that come in one-by-one. You need to choose a natural way for the eye to move, e.g. from background to foreground, along a river, from valley floor to hilltop, and then '**lead**' your reader through the picture.



### Task 28 Brainstorming for Descriptive Writing

- 1 Choose a **place that you have visited** which has stayed in your memory or an event that you have taken part in. Ensure that it is a real place rather than a virtual place. Try to identify what makes that place or event **memorable** e.g. it invokes a feeling of *excitement* or *peace*, *joy* or *sadness*, *anger* or *remorse*, *love*, *fear* or *longing*, *desire* or *hate*. Make sure that you use some of the aspects of language (see pages 5-6) in answering these questions (e.g. the language features). You could choose to describe the place or event as you see it **now** in the present day, or how you saw it **then**, in the past, in your mind's eye.

Possible topics could include :

*A beach scene*

*The airport arrivals lounge*

*An exciting game*

*A bush scene*

*An ANZAC ceremony*

*Fishing from the wharf*

*A kapa haka event*

*The end of a marathon*

*A garden*

*The family bach*

*A celebration party*

*A hospital waiting room*

My chosen topic :

- 2 Brainstorm everything you know about your **chosen place** and write about it as if it is happening in the **present tense** :
  - a) **Where** is the place (indoor or outdoor)?
  - b) **When** does the moment take place?
  - c) **Who** is there?
  - d) **Describe** the physical look of the place.

## 33 Writing Poetry

### Task 32 Create Your Own Poem

- 1 Draft your own poem here incorporating the ideas you have outlined above in Task 31. Highlight items for inclusion. Recite your poem aloud as you write and look for ways to improve it by **condensing the language**, incorporating **language features** such as punctuation, alliteration, metaphor, simile, personification, typographical effects, and by **removing small redundant words**.  
Be prepared to write several drafts of your poem before you publish in order to **sharpen** the images, and **rearrange** your lines. Think about your intended **audience** as you do this.

#### First Draft

Title :



## 39 Writing a Script

### Task 36 Elements of a Script

Writing a play script involves writing **dialogue**, creating **characters**, developing a **plot** and a **punch line**. Here is an example of a short play written by Susan Battye called *Tagged*.

- 1 Read through the extract from the play '*Tagged*' which is commonly known as a comedy sketch, noting the **essential elements** that you will need to include in your own play text such as: a **title**, **characters**, **dialogue**, a **theme** and **stage directions**. Try acting out this text in a space by standing up and reading it aloud with a friend. Feel free to have a go at the aspects suggested such as the break dance moves.

### **Tagged** by Susan Battye

#### **A Comedy Sketch**

Characters : *MS GIBBONS, the school's deputy principal, aged between 30-40 years. SPIKE, a teenage pupil of the school.*

Scene : *SPIKE, the school rebel, and MS GIBBONS, wait outside the principal's office. SPIKE spins on the floor, break dance style. MS GIBBONS stands guard with a file in her hand.*

MS GIBBONS : Will you stop that, Spike? You're doing me head in.

SPIKE : Good floor for doing spins. Wasted in here.

MS GIBBONS : Draw attention to yourself, why don't you, outside the Principal's office.

SPIKE : Ms Gibbons, what do you suggest I do? Sit and bite me nails? Don't think so.

MS GIBBONS : What are you going to say to Mr Crispin?

SPIKE : Nothin'.

MS GIBBONS : Have you seen that room he puts you in if you don't talk?

SPIKE : You mean the one with no windows?

MS GIBBONS : Yeah. You stay there all day.

SPIKE : Sweet. Don't have to go to class.

MS GIBBONS : No going to the caff at interval to see your friends.

SPIKE : Who cares? Sick of that crowd anyway.

MS GIBBONS : No getting out at lunch.

SPIKE : Ain't got no lunch.

MS GIBBONS : No music to plug into your brain.

SPIKE : Sensory deprivation! No!

MS GIBBONS : And we take your cell phone off you.

SPIKE : *(Shocked)* Now that's against the law. Cell phone's personal property. There's a lot of private information in there.

MS GIBBONS : Spike. We are the law.

SPIKE : That's what you think.

MS GIBBONS : The walls have ears Spike.

SPIKE : What? Where?

MS GIBBONS : We saw you at the lockers.

SPIKE : What a load of crap!

MS GIBBONS : Think about it. How come you got picked up so fast?

SPIKE : The weasel on office duty told on me?

MS GIBBONS : Wrong. We tracked your cell phone.

SPIKE : Never! I've done nothing!

MS GIBBONS : "Bombings da Bomb!" Wasn't that the title of your little impromptu speech in English class on Wednesday?

Task 36 continues on next page

## 49 Common Errors of Grammar

### Task 43 Proof-Reading for Pronouns

*I / me / myself, he / him / himself, she / her / herself and we / us / ourselves* are often used wrongly when they are in combinations. To check and fix these, split up the combination and try each word separately with the rest of the sentence.

Let's say you want to check the sentence *It's for him and I* :

*It's for him.* - This sounds right and is right.

Nobody would say : *It's for he.*

*It's for I.* - This sounds wrong and is wrong.

Time to try another pronoun from the set.

*It's for me.* - This sounds right and is right.

So the right sentence is : *It's for him and me.*

1 Check the pronouns in these sentences. Cross out the wrong alternative.

- |                                                                 |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a) <i>He / him</i> and <i>she / her</i> went to a horror movie. | b) An invitation arrived for you and <i>I / me</i> .               |
| c) Brad and <i>she / her</i> found it.                          | d) <i>Him</i> and <i>me / He</i> and I were the ones who got away. |
| e) My uncle and <i>us / we</i> all went to the pictures.        | f) It's a little present from my wife and <i>myself / me</i> .     |
| g) There's a letter addressed to you and <i>I / me</i> .        | h) <i>She / her</i> and her friends would giggle all the time.     |
| i) Take one for your sister and one for <i>you / yourself</i> . | j) Let's do something for <i>us / ourselves</i> for a change.      |
| k) She cooked tea for herself and <i>me / myself</i> .          | l) Only our parents and <i>we / us</i> have the right to be here.  |

### Task 44 Proof-Reading for Tense

Every proper sentence has a verb. It is the word that tells you what the action is - that's why primary schools call them doing words. (At NCEA Level One, you should know that as well as the **doing** words, there are also the **being** words and **having** words which are verbs too.) The verb could be **one word or several**, but built into the verb is its **tense**, the information about whether the action belongs to a **past, present or future** time.

Consider this set : I *worked* (past tense/past time) I *work* (present tense/present time) I *will work* (future tense/future time)

When you get the tense wrong, you get the facts wrong because your reader understands the time frame you have written, not the time frame you should have written.

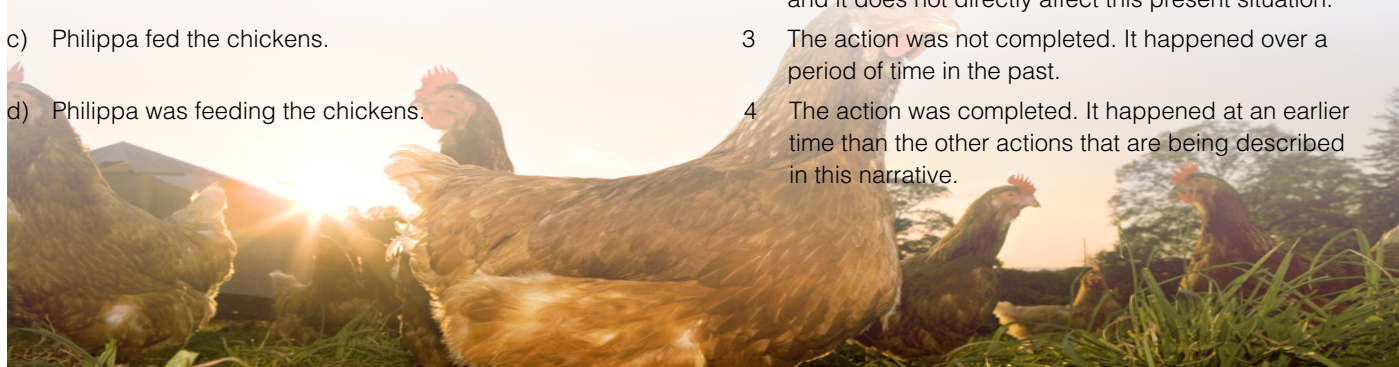
Another common problem is a confusion between the future tense word **will** and the word **would**. There are various meanings of **would** - the one that gives most trouble is the one that goes with the word **if** and shows an action that is possible. Consider these :

*If I won Lotto, I would give you half.* (Here *would* and *if* are both written.)

*Would you go into a burning house?* (Here the *if* is implied, we know the question is short for *Would you go into a burning house if you happened to see one?*)

1 Draw an arrow from the sentence to the description which best fits the meaning of its tense.

- |                                       |                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a) Philippa had fed the chickens.     | 1 The action was completed. It happened in the past but it directly affects this present situation.                           |
| b) Philippa has fed the chickens.     | 2 The action was completed. It happened in the past and it does not directly affect this present situation.                   |
| c) Philippa fed the chickens.         | 3 The action was not completed. It happened over a period of time in the past.                                                |
| d) Philippa was feeding the chickens. | 4 The action was completed. It happened at an earlier time than the other actions that are being described in this narrative. |



Task 44 continues on next page

## 50 Common Errors of Grammar

### Task 44 Proof-Reading for Tense - continued

2 Highlight the **correct** alternative in these sentences.

- a) If he caught the bus he **will** **would** be home by now.
- b) She will start to walk home after school and hopes that her brother **will** **would** pick her up.
- c) I was afraid he **will** **would** hate me for the rest of his life.
- d) They **will** **would** be able to come when their parents finally agree.

### Task 45 Proof-Reading for Singular and Plural

**Singular** words (words for a single person or thing) have to be matched up with other singular words. **Plural** words (words for more than one person or thing) have to be matched with other plurals. You have been doing this automatically for about fourteen years. Consider :

*She has a beautiful face.* matches the singular words *she*, *has*, *a*, and *face*

*They have beautiful faces.* matches the plural words *they*, *have*, and *faces*.

Here is the problem : Some sentences start with a singular **and** a plural: e.g. *A crowd of spectators, a flock of sheep, a packet of chips.*

Do you say : *A crowd of spectators is . . .* or *A crowd of spectators are . . .* ?

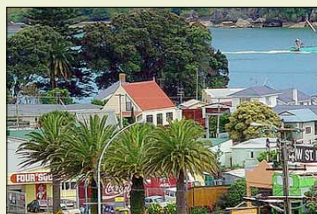
**Spectators are** sounds right because both words are plurals. Unfortunately, it's wrong. The **headword** (first noun) of *A crowd of spectators* is a collective noun; singular (i.e. one crowd) and the other words in the sentence must **match the headword**. '*A crowd of spectators is doing the Mexican wave*' is therefore correct.

1 Complete these sentences by highlighting the alternative that matches.

- a) Trucks in a long convoy **is** **are** crossing the plain.
- b) A swarm of angry wasps **was** **were** frightening the children.
- c) That boxful of old library books **is** **are** being sent off for recycling.
- d) All those drivers in that long queue **is** **are** going to be late.
- e) Keith's CD of country and western songs **was** **were** driving us mad.



### Task 46 Proof-Reading for Participle Problems



Descriptive phrases beginning with **participles** are good ways to start your sentences. They look like this :

*Hugging the edge of the harbour, the village of Raglan sprawls in the sun.*

*Marooned by his shipmates, Robinson Crusoe faced a lonely future.*

But beware that these descriptions apply to the nearest person or thing in the rest of the sentence, so :

*Lying upside down and stinking of alcohol, the policeman checked the wrecked car.*

is an **ungrammatical** sentence (bad); the description that should apply to the car is here applied to the policeman.

1 Rewrite these sentences to fix the participle problem.

- a) *Wobbling deliciously and covered in marshmallows, Mrs Smith carried in the jelly.*
- b) *Dressed to kill in a slinky black dress, Oliver thought she looked wonderful.*
- c) *Wearing a mask and pointing a gun, the bank teller faced the robber.*